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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko
Notetakers: Ed Chabot, Carmen DeGeorge, and
Michael Chapman

DATE, TIME February 1, 2006, 7:28 - 7:45 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hey, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: Hi, George. Nice to hear from you. (U)

The President: Vladimir. Listen, I'm calling because I'm upset. You set a terrible precedent for the rest of us world leaders by answering questions for 3 hours. I don't think I can stand on my feet that long. (S)

President Putin: Luckily, I wasn't standing. You yourself have made another record high which is much more important. We were watching the speech you made. I'm not talking about the contents. Each and every minute of your speech was interrupted by applause. (S)

The President: Thanks, I took a lesson from you. (U)

President Putin: I'm very pleased to hear your voice. (U)

The President: Listen, I'm calling you about Iran. I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue. Lavrov has consulted with Condi. This is an issue where Russia will play a pivotal role in solving this problem. One, your proposal on providing Iranians with enriched uranium instead of giving them the know-how to do it themselves was very important. Two,

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I strongly support it, and the world will see how strategic that decision was. I think, as the world begins to realize your leadership on this, it will be very important. So, I'm calling to thank you. As we come to decision-making points, feel free to call or visit. This is an issue that we must work closely on. Finally, just to let you know, J.D. Crouch is coming to continue our strategic dialogue. J.D. Crouch, not Hadley. That is important as well. (S)

President Putin: Well, I understood that. I will provide him with all the necessary contacts. Speaking about our proposal with Iran, the Iranians understand the essence of the proposal and tried to avoid it. I recently visited Kazakhstan for the celebrations surrounding the reelection of President Nazarbayev. The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs was present, and he requested to meet with me. We refused. He managed to grab my hand as we were leaving the building. When I said they brushed our proposal off, he said they were studying the proposal. But, at the same time, our contacts showed that this is another trick to evade our measure. Nevertheless, we will continue these efforts. In the near future, Lavrov will meet with Condoleezza Rice. He will be ready to exchange new information regarding Iran. On January 24th, the Secretary of Iran's National Security Council Larijani visited Moscow. He also requested a meeting with me. I declined because it's not appropriate. Also, I would like to extend my gratitude for the flexibility of your American colleagues regarding the Iranian matter. I hope, and I am convinced, that we will continue to work together on this issue.

Today, Boris Yeltsin is celebrating his 75th birthday. If you don't mind, I will offer your congratulations. (S)

The President: Please do it. (S)

President Putin: He invited his colleagues with whom he worked with from Germany, and President Clinton from the United States. I would like to tell you that I will definitely see President Clinton. We will also talk with Berlusconi today. We will pass on your regards. I had a meeting yesterday with an Italian priest. I asked him to deliver to Berlusconi an ancient Russian icon.

I have a question about the WTO accession. Yesterday, I had to say the United States is the last block to Russia's joining the WTO, and that the only person who wants that is my good friend, President Bush. (S)

The President: Let me check on that and find out where we are. Portman and Gref have seen each other. I don't know the status, so I'll check on it. (S)

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President Putin: Well, when they met here, they insisted that you were pressing them. (S)

The President: Let me check. Thank you for that. (S)

President Putin: The Secretary of the Treasury from the United States is coming. (S)

The President: Don't worry about President Clinton, he's my father's new best friend. (U)

President Putin: I can see that on television.

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The President:

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President Putin: Hugs and all the best. (U)

The President: All right Vladimir, talk to you later. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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